Merger of BSNL and MTNL

†740. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received report from the Expert Committee constituted for the merger of BSNL and MTNL;

(b) if so, the main recommendations thereof;

(c) whether action on the said recommendations has been initiated;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) whether any measures have been suggested in the above report to effectively check the corruption prevalent in the BSNL?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) The Consultants' report is under examination. The Consultants have studied several options and found that "acquisition of MTNL by BSNL and IPO by BSNL" is a preferred option.

(c) and (d) There are several complex issues relating to Human Resources (HR), stamp duties and other costs etc. involved in the restructuring exercise, which are being examined.

(e) No, Sir.

Expansion of communication services in rural areas

†741. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is reduction in Government's interest in the expansion of communication services in rural areas;

(b) whether it is also a fact that in rural areas, people have to wait for eight years after the registration for telephone connections;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.